

Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Saturday 11 November 1978

CG NIDC 78/263

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

Top Secret

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DIA review(s) completed.

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Approved For Release 2007/03/07 : CIA-RDP79T00975A030900010068-4

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday, 11 November 1978.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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IRAN: Dim Prospect for Compromise

The leader of the opposition National Front in Iran, Karim Sanjabi, yesterday took an uncompromising stand against participating in a coalition government, further dimming prospects for a political compromise with the Shah.

Sanjabi's call for the continued use of strikes as the opposition's weapon against the military government may prompt Prime Minister Azhari to order the arrest of opposition politicians who continue to agitate against the Shah. Azhari thus far has not tried to curb the activities of opposition politicians in the hope they might be persuaded to join a coalition government.

Sanjabi's hard line confirms that he and his followers are responding to the direction of extremist religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini. Sanjabi returned to Tehran yesterday after conferring with Khomeini, who is in exile in Paris.

The arrest of former Prime Minister Hoveyda is another example of the Shah's determination to give the appearance of correcting past abuses. Even so, the disgrace of one of the Shah's former close political associates will tarnish the Shah personally. Hoveyda was charged with corruption, but he had been under fire primarily because of his alleged connection with the Bahai, a sect regarded as heretical by orthodox Muslims.

Oil production increased slightly yesterday for the second day in succession. The oil industry on Friday was scheduled to produce about 1.7 million barrels; normal output is about 6 million barrels per day. The gains in production are credited to the efforts of Navy personnel who have been pressed into service in the oilfields.

AFGHANISTAN: Unrest Continues

25X1 [] *The tribal rebellion in eastern Afghanistan has escalated recently and has spread to Qandahar Province in the south, but poses little threat at this time to the government. The extremist Muslim Brotherhood has become more active; it was apparently responsible for several explosions in Kabul last week. So far the military has remained loyal to the government, but a significant further spread of popular unrest could test its willingness to support the leftist regime.*

25X1 [] Fighting between government troops and Pathan tribesmen in Laghman, Paktia, and Nangarhar Provinces--all located near Afghanistan's eastern border--broke out soon after the coup last April. By late summer, dissidence had spread to non-Pathans farther north. In the past two months the fighting has escalated, as have government efforts to contain the rebellion. Air attacks have occurred almost daily, and reprisal raids are becoming more common.

25X1 [] Late last month, the unrest spread to Qandahar Province. Americans there reported a 24-hour power outage on 31 October--apparently due to sabotage. The government seems to have the situation in hand; tanks are in evidence in the towns and a 9:00 p.m. curfew is being strictly enforced.

25X1 [] Several explosions have been heard in Kabul itself, one close to the US AID compound. The Muslim Brotherhood--a conservative Islamic group that has declared holy war against the "infidel, traitorous, Communist" regime--is suspected of being responsible.

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25X1 [] The intensified unrest poses little threat to the central government at this time. Although the insurgents may claim occasional successes, the military, with modern equipment--including aircraft--and better organization and communications, has a decided edge over almost any combination of tribal dissidents. The Muslim Brotherhood appears to lack the cohesive leadership and support of the armed forces to challenge the regime seriously.

25X1 [] Widespread popular discontent, however, could easily be exploited by the government's domestic and foreign enemies and would almost certainly affect the loyalty of the military--the mainstay of any Afghan regime. Almost all the officer corps and a significant part of the enlisted men are Pathans--the same ethnic group as most of the rebelling tribes--and their support for the regime will be severely tested if operations against their fellow countrymen and coreligionists continue to escalate. 25X1 []

CHINA-CAMBODIA-VIETNAM-THAILAND

25X1 [] //Senior Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping, in the first authoritative Chinese comment on the Soviet-Vietnamese treaty of friendship and cooperation, has publicly described it as "military" in nature. [] Teng went on to say the treaty will give Vietnam a "free hand" in Cambodia and that China will "keep a close watch on the situation." He further stated China's reaction will be determined by the extent of Vietnam's "aggression" and felt that Chinese and other South-east Asian leaders should "consult regularly" on the situation.// 25X1

25X1 [] //The Chinese leader, during his visit to Thailand on 5-9 November, took the opportunity to warn that Vietnam and the USSR have ambitions in the region beyond Cambodia and that the treaty serves Soviet strategy to dominate Asia and the Pacific. In discussions in Thailand, Teng asserted that the USSR is reviving its interest in what it used to call the "Asian collective security system"--a concept aimed at isolating China--and he reminded his host of Thailand's past opposition to this system.//

25X1 [] //Teng also urged that the Thais strengthen relations and increase the level of contacts with Cambodia because the coming Vietnamese offensive will not be small-scale and "Cambodia needs help."//

25X1 [] //Yesterday, as Teng toured Malaysia, Peking issued a stern warning to Hanoi concerning the China-Vietnam border. An authoritative editorial in *Peoples Daily* said China "will never allow recurrence" of an incident like the one on 1 November in which six Chinese were killed. Peking described the situation as "intolerable" and cautioned that "the Vietnamese authorities must not turn a deaf ear to China's warning."//

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[] //While Teng was in Thailand, party Vice Chairman Wang Tung-hing led the highest ranking Chinese delegation yet to visit Phnom Penh. The composition of Wang's delegation and reports of his activities in Cambodia were designed to send a message of continuing political and economic support for the Phnom Penh regime while playing down military links, and at the same time bolster Teng Hsiao-ping's efforts to portray Cambodia and China as victims of Vietnamese aggression and "Soviet hegemony."//

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[] //We have no indication of what specific issues were discussed in talks between the Chinese and Cambodians, but there is one sign that they did not go entirely smoothly. Although the atmosphere was described as one of "extreme cordiality," Phnom Penh quoted Wang as saying the talks were "frank"--a term normally used by Communist media to indicate disagreement. Peking, in its version of Wang's remarks, did not use this term.//

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[] //Peking appears to be positioning itself to maintain maneuverability in the Vietnam-Cambodia dispute. On the one hand, through public [] statements, the Chinese appear to be trying to exploit Asian reactions to the Soviet-Vietnamese alliance in order to build support for Cambodia and thus to impose political limits on the extent of Vietnam's efforts against Cambodia in the coming months.//

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[] //On the other hand, Chinese officials have been playing down the possibility of sending troops to Cambodia. They have nevertheless suggested there may be more "incidents" along the China-Vietnam border. Peking, while stopping short of an irrevocable commitment to defend the Phnom Penh regime, is attempting to maintain its credibility as Cambodia's ally.

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LEBANON: Situation Report

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[] *The cease-fire in Beirut is holding despite an outbreak of artillery fire during this week. Rivalry among Maronite factions in northern Lebanon and recent attacks aimed at government officials are threatening the truce.*

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25X1 [] The cease-fire was marred Wednesday night by exchanges of artillery and mortar fire between Maronite militiamen and Syrian units in one of the most serious breaches of the month-old truce. The city was relatively calm Thursday and early Friday, and both sides appear to want the cease-fire to hold.

25X1 [] In northern Lebanon, tension has increased as a result of incidents allegedly caused by the Syrians and their allies, the followers of former President Sulayman Franjiyah. The Phalangists say Franjiyah's militia attacked a Phalangist-controlled village on Wednesday, killing two and kidnaping another. Earlier this week the Phalangists accused the Syrians of sending a patrol into a Phalangist district, despite an agreement not to do so.

25X1 [] //The Israelis also are concerned that the Syrians may be planning new violence in the north, perhaps in conjunction with a move against the Phalange by Franjiyah supporters.

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25X1 [] //The Israelis also report that the Syrians are preparing to build a new road in northern Lebanon capable of handling heavy vehicles. The road would shorten the distance between Syria and northern Lebanon and allow the Syrians to bypass routes under Christian control.// []

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UNESCO: Information Resolution

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[redacted] The outcome of the 20th General Conference of the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris has been jeopardized by the introduction of a draft resolution calling for an action plan to implement "The New World Information Order." The draft was introduced on Thursday by Tunisian Information Minister Masmoudi, the leading spokesman on communications issues for the nonaligned movement.

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[redacted] Some version of the resolution, which is likely to get strong support from most members of the nonaligned group, stands a good chance of being adopted despite Western efforts

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to prevent its consideration at the conference. Adoption of the resolution raises the prospect of a major confrontation that could result in a reduction of Western financial support to UNESCO.

25X1 [] The draft addresses the ostensible need to correct the imbalance between the information and communication agencies of the developing nations and those of the industrialized world. It gives particular attention to the efforts of the nonaligned countries to free their mass media from the influence of the developed nations' news agencies. The draft also calls for the creation of an open-ended international fund and for a UNESCO-sponsored group of communications experts to implement "The New World Information Order."

25X1 [] The document specifies that another group of experts be formed to prepare papers for the World Administrative Radio Conference. The conference, which will take place next September, will reallocate international radio frequencies for the first time in 20 years. The nonaligned countries have met previously to form a coordinated position for the conference, where they hope to obtain a larger share of the radio frequencies that they believe are dominated by the developed world.

25X1 [] Masmoudi's introduction of the resolution comes during intensive efforts by the Western nations to amend a contentious draft declaration on mass media and threatens the prospects for a US initiative to create a consultative group to address the communications needs of the developing countries. Masmoudi said that the nonaligned group's acceptance of the Western version of the mass media declaration will depend on Western acquiescence to his draft. Regardless of the outcome in Paris, the topic of "The New World Information Order" will probably arise at the UN General Assembly later this year. [] 25X1

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BRIEFS

North Korea

25X1 [] North Korea has officially protested the newly established South Korean - US combined forces command in Seoul. According to a statement by a Foreign Ministry spokesman, the joint command formed on 7 November is intended to expedite war

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preparations, and provides further evidence that the US does not intend to withdraw its troops from South Korea. The rhetoric is not harsh by North Korean standards, however, and a spokesman's statement by the Foreign Ministry is one of Pyongyang's lowest levels of formal protest.

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[] North Korea has consistently questioned the sincerity of the US withdrawal plan, and it has not acknowledged that the first increment of US ground combat forces is actually preparing to leave South Korea. Last month an infantry battalion of the US 2nd Division was relieved from its forward position and it is scheduled to depart for the US mainland by mid-December.

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Argentina-Chile

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[] Argentina on Thursday announced its willingness to resort to mediation in the Beagle Channel dispute, but at the same time insisted that another stage of bilateral talks should precede any arbitration by a third party. Outside help was first raised several weeks ago by Chile, but Argentina has been reluctant to go along.

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[] Spanish King Juan Carlos, who will visit Buenos Aires in late November, appears to be a possible choice as mediator, although Chile clearly would prefer to take the issue to The Hague. []

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